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ABSTRACT

North Carolina's legislature mandated changes in principal preparation programs and funded a program for Principal Fellows to receive loans for a full-time, 2-year program toward initial administrator licensure. This paper examines data from three innovative components in one university's program under that mandate: extended internships, simulation, and leadership portfolios. Data from the full-time extended internship indicated that Principal Fellows were very satisfied with the experience they gained and were better prepared for entry-level administrative positions than their part-time counterparts. They took on more challenging assignments, especially in areas like student discipline and teacher leadership. Full-time interns participating in the Springfield simulation (a 7-hour simulation of the Springfield School District at work) had the opportunity for individualized development of leadership skills, receiving feedback from experienced administrators and peers which encouraged growth and planning. Students believed the simulation helped them expand their skills and become more sensitive. The program's leadership portfolio component required that Fellows maintain a portfolio of experiences related to development of leadership skills. Development of this culminating portfolio allowed Fellows to integrate course assignments and field experiences and established a process for continuing professional development. Three appendixes offer the North Carolina Standards Board for Public School Administration Performance Domains for the Principalship; the National Association of Secondary School Principals Springfield Skill Development for Leaders Assessment Skills; and the leadership portfolio. (SM)

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# EVALUATING THE RESULTS OF INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

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**Evaluating the Results of Innovative Practices in Educational Leadership Programs**

Lynn K. Bradshaw, George Perreault, James O. McDowelle, & Edwin W. Bell

## Abstract

The North Carolina Legislature mandated changes in principal preparation programs and concurrently funded a program for Principal Fellows who would receive a $40,00 loan for a full-time two-year program toward initial administrative licensure. The loan would be forgiven if the Fellow then worked for four years as an administrator in state public schools. The first cohort of Fellows graduated in May 1997, and this paper examines three innovative components in one university's program under that state mandate.

The Extended Internship

Students who completed the year-long internship are clearly better prepared for entry-level positions than their part-time counterparts. As a group they took on more challenging assignments, especially in such areas as student discipline and teacher evaluation. They also reported benefits from working on other districts than the ones in which they had been teachers and in working together as a cohort.

The Springfield Simulation

Use of the NASSP Springfield simulation provided a basis for individualized development of leadership skills. Students were able to get feedback from experienced administrators and from peers in a low-risk environment which encouraged growth planning.

The Leadership Portfolio

The development of a culminating portfolio allowed the Fellows to integrate course assignments and field experiences, and it established a process for continuing professional development. The documentation and its "defense" by the student served well as written and oral examinations but some requirements were seen as more useful that others.

Evaluative data and the lessons learned from these efforts should be useful to those who are considering implementing similar components in school leadership programs.



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Universities, as open systems, are sensitive to wider social pressures, including the widely-held perception that we need new ways to prepare school leaders (Clark & Clark, 1996; Lewis, 1997) at the same time as the number of needed new school administrator is rising (North Carolina State Board of Education, 1997). For these reasons, states, which effectively "own" the licensing procedures within their boundaries, direct universities to reform their programs, and willingly or not universities tend to comply. Fortunately, many state mandates are broad enough that universities can respond by developing programs that address factors the faculty consider to be especially important; these might include emotional intelligence (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997), collaboration (Wood & Gray, 1991), or sensitivity to diversity (Darling-Hammond, 1995).

The purpose of this paper is to share the results of three innovative components in one university's preparation program for school administrators: (1) a full-time, year-long internship during the second year of study; (2) use of the NASSP's Springfield simulation with the student cohort; and (3) a required leadership portfolio of evidence demonstrating knowledge, skill, and professional perspectives expected of school leaders. These components were developed in response to a mandate by the North Carolina Legislature for new principal preparation programs in the state, included support for a limited number of "Principal Fellows." Qualified applicants could receive a loan of $40,000 for two years of full-time study, and the loan would be forgiven if the recipient worked as a

school administrator in North Carolina for four years. The first cohort of full-time students graduated for the new programs in May 1997.

At the same time, the university has maintained its program for part-time students who are seeking licensure as school administrators. These students complete the same basic course work as do the Principal Fellows, but their internships are more limited in terms of duration and intensity. One of the purposes of this study was to assess the relative effectiveness of the two types of internship.

**The Extended Internship**

The typical schedule for Principal Fellows was to keep Mondays free for campus seminars, but to be otherwise committed to being "on the job" in their school district. There was considerable variation within the placements that the Fellows could arrange. Some were assigned to a single school for the whole academic year, while others spent one semester each at two different instructional levels. Many of the Principal Fellows received supplemental stipends from their districts and clearly were perceived as being part of the administrative team at their sites. Some of them quickly assumed responsibilities in substantive areas (e.g., student disciple and teacher evaluation) while others were assigned "token" responsibilities (such as directing a small project to support school volunteers) and struggled to be viewed as significant contributors to the leadership effort in their schools.

In spite of within-group variations, however, as a whole the Principal Fellows were very satisfied with the experience they gained, and they were clearly better prepared for entry-level administrative positions than their part-time counterparts. For example, full-time interns were much more heavily involved with instructional leadership issues,

especially with teacher evaluation. They typically had the opportunity to conduct dozens of classroom observations and numerous conferences with teachers. Some of these were done in conjunction with a principal or assistant principal, but some of the Fellows had responsibility for the complete evaluative process for 12 or 13 or, in one case, for 30 teachers. Since one of the challenges for new school administrators is to overcome the effects of their isolation as classroom teachers, it cannot help be beneficial to have such experiences as observing "all non-tenured certified staff at least once, my cohort of tenured teachers at lest thrice, and non-certified staff at least once."

In contrast, part-time interns generally reported few opportunities to be involved in teacher observations. Much of their time was spent doing useful but tangential administrative tasks: developing schedules; chairing the graduation committee; preparing handouts for meetings; completing purchase orders; and serving on SACS committees. In addition, for logistical reasons, part-time students almost invariably take positions within their own districts, and although they begin to increase their perspective, they do not have they benefit which many Principal Fellows had of "stepping outside the box" and seeing how things are done in different environments.

Not unexpectedly, the Fellows also reported that the internship reinforced concepts they had acquired during their year of campus work, including the value of teamwork that grew out of cohort experiences. As one put it a survey, "We all learned, I think, how to accept team members for who they are and, from that point, get work done." They also reported that the sheer "ongoingness" of the internship allowed them to practice listening and other interpersonal skills, afforded opportunities to identify problems and develop plans to solve them, and to become seen as experts in such areas as



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technology which were stressed in the university program. In reflective comments toward the end of their experience, the Principal Fellows exhibited both a confidence in their emerging skills and an appreciation for the complexity of the systems they would be entering – a balance which seems appropriate for entry-level leaders, and once to which the extended internship may well have contributed.

## The Springfield Simulation

The first cohort of full-time interns participated in NASSP's Springfield development program in January 1997, while they were beginning the second semester of their internships. The Springfield program was chosen as an opportunity for skill development in six areas that were introduced the first day: problem analysis, judgement, organizational ability, decisiveness, leadership, and sensitivity. Participants are given an opportunity to choose which two skill areas they wish to concentrate on and to be observed on during the simulation. On the second day, the students chose a role as a principal, assistant principal, or central office supervisor in a seven-hour simulation of the Springfield School District at work. At the conclusion of the simulation, participants have a chance to provide skills-based feedback to others in the simulation. The third day is spent in group feedback sessions and planning for further professional development.

The skills focus selected by students prior to Springfield is shown below:

| | | PA | J | OA | D | L | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| # Students Selecting Skill | 5 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 4 | |

Most notably, interest in the skill area of sensitivity tended to be higher after the simulation experience. Most students identified sensitivity as a strength to further refine or as an area for growth in their plans for growth following Springfield. One student identified sensitivity descriptors both as a strength and also as an area for growth depending on the specific context for the behavior. The student wanted to continue to build her strength in "electing perceptions, feelings, and concerns of others," but she saw a need to improve her ability to "express verbal and non-verbal recognition of feelings, needs, and concerns of others."

In her journal, another student described her experience in the area of sensitivity as follows:

> Springfield was an interesting and valuable experience. I was complimented and criticized for sensitivity issues (not on my list of things to work on during the 3 days). It seems as if everyone got comments about sensitivity. That was certainly the easiest thing to observe. I must work on hiding my facial expressions when I am faced with people who seem momentarily incompetent. I learned in a Myers-Briggs session that, as an ENTJ, I can't tolerate incompetence, and I fear it most in myself. How true that was during Springfield!

Another student noted that, "Springfield forced me to be reflective about my affective role as an administrator, to discover my weaknesses in that area, and to take steps to improve."

During the three-day training session and for the rest of the semester, faculty and school district administrators served as mentors for the Principal Fellows. All three groups – faculty, administrators, and students –found that Springfield provided a common language to use to discuss developmental opportunities. Once challenge, however, was finding a useful way for tying the Springfield skills together with the course work, the internship experiences, and the knowledge, skills, and professional

perspectives of the ten North Carolina Standards for School Administrators. Ultimately it was decided to create a matrix showing the NC Performance Domains down the side and the Springfield skill areas across the top. Using this, students identified areas for focus during the remainder of their internship, merging them wherever practical. Two examples are shown below.

| | |
|---|---|
| Skill: | Sensitivity: Elicit perceptions and feelings of others |
| Standard: | Collaboration and Empowerment |
| Goal: | Seek input and feedback from staff before making decisions.<br>Involve staff in school decision making. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Skill: | Organizational Ability |
| Standard: | Collaboration and Empowerment |
| Goal: | To elicit a firm commitment from others regarding time and work products for increasing classroom performance. |

Student reaction to participation in the Springfield simulation was very positive. A few representative comments in response to evaluative questions are shown below.

***Were you able to implement suggestions from your mentors and peers?***

- Most definitely. I was told I need to be more sensitive. I have forced myself to think before I act.



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- Yes. By being more sensitive. I put into practice by being aware of personal interactions.
- Yes. Entering into conversations. This is hard for me because I have to learn more about timing. But I did it and was able to contribute more to discussions.

***Have you expanded your skills as a result of Springfield?***

- Yes. I did not realize that I was not being sensitive to the needs of others until Springfield.
- Yes! I have developed in the area of problem analysis. I feel as though this is an area which is used every day – and often.
- Yes – Leadership. I helped collaborate to develop the school improvement plan, establish an alternative reading program, and a grant writing committee. I also helped write and do data analysis for a school improvement grant.
- I was able to integrate my targeted areas for improvement into daily activities (making decisions, arranging meetings, scheduling, conferencing, etc.).

***What lessons have you learned?***

- I have learned that all of the skills and behaviors coupled with the domains play a large part in development as an administrator.
- That I need to take time and work to involve people meaningfully in decision making.
- I need to slow down and address sensitivity issues or everything else will suffer.

Other supportive statements of the value of the Springfield experience were contained in third of the innovative components, the portfolio used for evaluation of the Principals Fellows.

**The Leadership Portfolio**

Each of the Principal Fellows was required to maintain a portfolio of experiences as the related to development of leadership skills. The initial framework for organizing the portfolios was based on the ten North Carolina leadership domains, but as the students also incorporated their Springfield skills into their internship activities, these also were documented within the portfolios.

Because one of the central functions of the portfolio is documentation of progress toward proficiency in the performance domains, the Principal Fellows kept logs of their activities and provided reflective comments on their efforts. A representative example of these comments is included below.

**Reflections** **October 17, 1996**

The past two weeks have been a great learning experience for me. We have been scheduling pre-conferences, announced observations, and post-conferences for nine ILP [beginning] teachers. It has not been easy.. There were so many other factors that had to be dealt with before trying to get four people (teacher, principal, myself, and mentor) together. I now see the value of what Dr. Glatthorn often discussed in his lectures concerning observations and sound teaching. I find myself looking for three key components: 1. Does the teacher give the students an opportunity to express what they already know prior to the lesson? 2. Does the teacher give the students and opportunity to express what they want to learn during the lesson? 3. Does the teacher give the students an opportunity to discuss what they learned from the lesson?

The past observations were difficult to schedule because of so many conflicts. The next two observations should be a lot easier because they will be unannounced.

Not unexpectedly, there was considerable variation in the quality of reflections in student logs. Periodic review of the logs by and feedback from university instructors alleviated this to some extent, but students were rarely as open or as thoughtful in their logs as they were in oral communications, either individually or even, in most cases, in seminar situations.

Portfolios were also used for students to document their self-assessments and the plans they had for achieving growth. They drew both upon the North Carolina standards and the skills presented during the Springfield simulation. Brief examples of a student assessment and subsequent plans are shown in Tables1 and 2.

**Table 1**

**INDIVIDUAL GROWTH PLAN**
**Strengths and Areas for Improvement**

| Areas of Strength | Areas for Improvement |
|---|---|
| **Vision:**<br>• Understands trends, issues, and research in education<br>• Understands the concept of vision | **Vision:**<br>• Understands community dynamics<br>• Understands group processes |
| **Learning:**<br>• Understands curriculum and its alignment with instruction<br>• Knows what instructional resources are available and how to allocate them<br>• Knows how to use assessment to enhance teaching and learning<br>• Knows how different teaching styles impact student learning | **Learning:**<br>• Knows the formal and informal leaders in the school community who broker the change process<br>• Knows how to organize the school to enhance teaching and learning |
| **Climate:**<br>• Understands that learning occurs best when students feel safe<br>• Understands that good morale is essential | **Climate:**<br>• Understands conflict resolution theory and practice<br>• Understands preventive and responsive strategies for dealing with school problems |
| **Professional Ethics:**<br>• Knows the ethical standards of the profession<br>• Knows his/her own convictions and their ethical implications | **Professional Ethics:**<br>• Understands the complexity of ethical issues in schools<br>• Understands how to analyze situations ethically |
| **Collaboration and Empowerment:**<br>• Understands group processes<br>• Knows that stakeholders can contribute<br>• Understands the research on collaboration, empowerment, and school improvement | **Collaboration and Empowerment:**<br>• Understands the community's political dynamics<br>• Understands the decision-making processes |
| **School Operations:**<br>• Knows pertinent local, state, and federal laws, policies, and procedures<br>• understands the budget process | **School Operations:**<br>• Knows community resources<br>• knows the school facilities<br>• knows the school staff |



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**Table 2**

| Goals for Action Plan/ January 1997 |
|---|
| Area of Strength/Goal for Refinement: Knows how to use technology to facilitate decision making/ I plan to explore other possible uses for technology by a school administrator. |
| Area for Improvement/Goal for Improvement: Knows the formal and informal leaders in the school community who broker the change process. Understands community dynamics/ After the recent changes in Greene County Schools that resulted in my move to another school, I feel that I need to learn more about how the community affects and causes changes within the schools. I will talk with school and community members and obtain any available printed information about the influence of community members. |

| Goals for Action Plan/ February 1997 (Springfield Focus Areas) |
|---|
| Area of Strength/Goal for Refinement: Understands the importance of responding to concerns and doing so in a timely manner/Communicate all necessary information to the appropriate person(s). I plan to make it a priority to notify others if I cannot meet specific obligations such as meetings, deadlines, etc. I will try very hard to avoid procrastination and idealistic notions that I am capable of doing everything that I believe needs to be done!! (Sensitivity S5)<br><br>Area of Strength/Goal for Refinement: Express verbal and non-verbal recognition of feelings, needs, concerns of others/ I plan to identify new and unique means for identifying and recognizing the feelings and concerns of all members of the school community. (Springfield S2) |
| Area for Improvement/Goal for Improvement: Recognize when a decision is required/ I plan to improve my ability to make needed decisions by anticipating the consequences if a decision is or is not made and asking experienced administrators to give me feedback concerning the quality of my decisions and suggestions for improvement.<br><br>Area for Improvement/Goal for Improvement: Knows how and when to delegate responsibility/ I plan to try and focus on identifying situations where I can delegate assignments and thus increase my own effectiveness. |

Students were also required to provide documentation of actions taken to achieve progress toward proficiency in the several required areas. For each item included, a cover sheet was required. Some of the Principal Fellows felt these sheets were

redundant, but we found that information was probably the most helpful data collected. (Two examples of student cover sheets are included in Appendix C.) It provided a common framework for assessing the impact of various program components and helped the facility determine progress to skill mastery. It also greatly facilitated our review of the portfolios which became, in effect, the "text" of the comprehensive examination at the end of the second year. Thus each student's "portfolio defense" was problem-based, highly individualized, and truly comprehensive.

## The Challenges Ahead

The first year of a new program is typically chaotic and exciting as faculty and students struggle to find what works well and what needs more refinement. One of the advantages of this is that it models for students the growth process in which we hope they will be engaging during their two years with us. We shared openly with them our use of formative evaluation data to guide program design and, by so doing, invited them to be collaborators with us. The challenge for our work with future cohorts is to maintaining that spirit of a joint pilgrimage rather than becoming to settled in "doing what we know works."

A related issue is continuing the focus on problem-based learning that was, almost of necessity, a feature of our work with the first cohort. The challenge for us is to remember that we can guide and facilitate students in many ways, but we also have to be respectful of their own search for the specific problems that drive them in their quest to provide leadership in public schools.

Another challenge is continue the conversation we have had as faculty members about what happens in the individual courses we teach, a conversation that conflicts with the prevailing culture of individual autonomy of university faculty. For example, if the students will ultimately be evaluated on the basis of their leadership portfolios, to what extent does that shape the experiences and requirements of preceding courses? If true reflection is a common weakness of our students, how do we as a faculty prepare them for that task?

Another challenges relate to the external environment in which we work. North Carolina will be using the examination of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium to certify entering school administrators. We have a responsibility to prepare students in a way that will facilitate their success on that examination at the same time as we try to take what is best from the state standards and the NASSP simulations that have been so helpful to our students. And then, of course, we have our own concerns with the NCATE process! Relating all of these various standards in a coherent program will require ongoing attention. That said, perhaps we should not worry about our program ever getting too settled, and look forward instead to the opportunity to dealing every year with the sort of evolutionary planning we recommend that our students apply in their positions of new leaders in the public schools.

###



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# Appendix A

**NORTH CAROLINA STANDARDS BOARD**

**for Public School Administration**

**Performance Domains for the Principalship**

I. VISION

The principal is an educational leader who facilitates the development, implementation, and communication of a shared vision of learning that reflects excellence and equity for all students.

II. LEARNING

The principal is an educational leader who promotes the development of organizational, instructional, and assessment strategies to enhance teaching and learning.

III. CLIMATE

The principal is an educational leader who works with others to ensure a working and learning climate that is safe, secure, and respectful of diversity.

IV. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

The principal is an educational leader who demonstrates integrity and behaves in an ethical manner.

V. COLLABORATION AND EMPOWERMENT

The principal is an educational leader who facilitates school improvement by engaging the school community's stakeholders in collaboration, team-building, problem-solving, and shared decision making.

VI. SCHOOL OPERATIONS

The principal is an educational leader who uses excellent management and leadership skills to achieve effective and efficient organizational operations.

VII. HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

The principal is an educational leader who employs effective interpersonal, communication, and public relations skills.

## VIII. DEVELOPMENT OF SELF AND OTHERS

The principal is an educational leader who demonstrates academic success, intellectual ability, and a commitment to life-long learning.

## IX. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT, EVALUATION, AND ASSESSMENT

The principal is an educational leader who promotes the appropriate use of reliable information to facilitate progress, evaluate personnel and programs, and to make decisions.

## X. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The principal is an educational leader who fosters a culture of continuous improvement focused upon teaching and learning.



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# Appendix B

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

### Springfield Skill Development for Leaders

### Assessment Skills

1. Problem Analysis

- Get all of the relevant information by
  - rephrasing the question or problem to see if new issues emerge.
  - listing the key problem issues.
  - considering other possible sources of information.
- Identify possible causes.
- If necessary, obtain additional information.
- Evaluate the information to insure that all essential criteria are met.
- Restate the problem considering new information
- Determine what critical criteria indicate that the problem or issue is resolved.

2. Judgment

- Identify criteria for evaluating the judgment, including who and what will be affected.
- Determine which criteria are most important.
- Analyze the problem.
- Verify, then evaluate the facts.
- Make a decision.
- Test the decision against the criteria.

3. Organizational Ability

- Set priorities of tasks for self and others considering criticality, time constraints, importance to workflow, etc.
- Obtain feedback on importance of work, workflow, performance of others, and time constraints to assess whether priorities need to be reset.
- Delegate tasks to others.
- Elicit firm commitment from others regarding time, products, work, etc., upon which work is contingent.
- Establish procedures for reporting/updating work status, problems, and/or delays.
- Organize files and work area for quick and easy access to data, forms, current work, and other often used materials.

4. Decisiveness

- Recognize when a decision is required by determining
  - the anticipated consequences if a decision is made.
  - the anticipated consequences if a decision is not made.
- Determine whether a short or long term solution is most appropriate to the situation.
- Consider alternatives.
- Choose the one alternative that will work the best.
- Make a timely decision based upon available data.
- Stick to the decision once it is made, resisting pressure from others.

5. Leadership

- Set and maintain direction for group or project.
- Get people to act by
  - encouraging participation.
  - delegating.
  - following up.
- Integrate own suggestions/recommendations and those of others in direction of group goals.
- Get people to accept responsibility for the outcome of the work undertaken.
- Accomplish goals of group or project.

6. Sensitivity

- Elicit perceptions, feelings, and concerns of others.
- Express verbal and non-verbal recognition of perceptions, feelings, and concerns of others.
- Take or reinforce actions that anticipate the emotional effects of specific behaviors.
- Accurately reflect the point of view of others by restating it, applying it, or encouraging feedback.
- Communicate all necessary information to the appropriate persons.
- When managing conflict, take and/or reinforce actions that consider the implications for all concerned; divert unnecessary conflict.



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# Appendix C

## LEADERSHIP PORTFOLIO: Description of Evidence

| Identification of Item Being Placed in Portfolio: | Primary Performance Domain: |
|---|---|
| Minutes from a meeting of the Student Achievement Committee, a committee which I chair composed of all the teachers who teach tested subjects. | Vision |
| | Other Domains ( if applicable): |
| | Collaboration & Empowerment |

**Description of Problem:**

As part of the leadership team I was assigned to chair a committee of teachers. The committee which I was assigned, student achievement, was charged with finding ways to improve student achievement based on EOG scores.

**Description of Your Action:**

I tried to make sure that my role on the committee was mainly that of a facilitator. I strongly feel that teachers will usually have the best ideas and that it was my job to elicit them. This year the committee analyzed previous year test scores to look for trends and identify areas that needed improvement. Additionally, the committee also looked into new techniques that would help improve instruction.

**What You Demonstrated or Learned:**

When I first chaired the committee I came across as to gun ho and to much of a know it all. I quickly learned that things went much better when the teachers took control of many of the functions of committee. I transformed my role to being much more of a supporter and less of a lecturer. The teachers responded well to this change and, after a bumpy start, the committee has run smoothly and implemented a number of new initiatives including, setting target scores for the EOG test, looking at center based instruction, holding a school wide science day, and coming up with an after school detention system.

**Link to Primary Performance Domain:**

The committee worked well because we were able to develop a vision of student achievement that demanded excellence of both teachers and students.

**Link to Other Performance Domains ( if applicable )**

The vision that was created was due to the amount of time the teachers spent working on things together and collaborating with each other.



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LEADERSHIP PORTFOLIO: Description of Evidence

| Identification of Item Being Placed in Portfolio:<br><br>Teacher Observations | Primary Performance Domain:<br>Information Management, Evaluation, and Assessment<br><br>Other Domains (if applicable):<br>Development of Self and Others |
|---|---|
| Description of Problem:<br><br>There are two observations presented. One of which is excellent, the other below standard. | |
| Description of Your Action:<br><br>After observing teachers, I met with them to discuss my findings. With the below standard teacher, I had prepared some suggestions and recommendations. She was aware that her lesson was not as good as it could have been. She accepted my recommendations and asked for additional help. I did note some improvement in her performance. | |
| What You Demonstrated or Learned:<br><br>When observations are below standard, be prepared with additional resources to help that teacher. Offer suggestions and recommendations for improvement. Allow the teacher input into the process. This particular teacher was going through some marital problems, but I could not let this affect my professional judgment about her performance. | |
| Link to Primary Performance Domain:<br>Works with staff to implement a personnel evaluation process for strengthening classroom performance.<br>Deals with marginal or incompetent performance effectively. | |
| Link to Other Performance Domains (if applicable):<br>Mentors the professional growth of others. | |



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